

## Here's a text if you've only a minute ...

The Lord says this:

'I am coming to gather the nations of every language. They shall come to witness my glory.'

*First Reading*

Strong is his love for us: he is faithful for ever.

*Psalm*

Yes, there are those now last who will be first,  
and those now first who will be last.

*Gospel*

Father, help us to seek the values  
that will bring us enduring joy in this changing world.

In our desire for what you promise  
make us one in mind and heart.

*Old Opening Prayer*

This week's texts if you want to reflect further:  
Isaiah 66: 18–21; Ps. 116 (117); Hebrews 12: 5–7.11–13; Luke 13: 22–30



And people  
from east and west,  
from north and south,  
will come  
to take their places  
at the feast  
in the kingdom.

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**ST. BEUNO'S OUTREACH IN THE DIOCESE OF WREXHAM**



Twenty-First Sunday in Ordinary Time  
Year C, 25th August 2019

Strong is his love for us!

Today's **Psalm** places the truth of God's love for all of humanity at the centre of this Sunday's liturgy.

The prophet Isaiah in the **First Reading** speaks of a time when the Lord will gather all people to himself. God's love is so strong that people of every nation, race, and belief – and even those of no faith – will be counted as his children.

But we are reminded in the **Gospel** to be careful; to avoid being complacent about our own faith and religious practice. There are no limits to where the spirit of God is at work, and God has no favourites. There is an urgency in Jesus's teaching here that links directly to Isaiah, for he speaks of a time when all will be gathered into God's kingdom feast, but those who take their faith for granted may find themselves shut out.

This spiritual teaching may seem harsh, but the **Second Reading** from Hebrews explains that our spiritual and temporal trials can only be understood when we are aware of the truth of our relationship as daughters and sons of God. God's love for us is strong, and God only wants what is best for us.

At a time when there is much division and animosity within political life and between nations, races and religions, let us pray that we, who belong to a community united by prayer, may by our words and deeds be a powerful sign of God's strong love for all of humanity.

### Opening Prayer

O God, who cause the minds of the faithful to unite in a single purpose,  
grant your people to love what you command  
and to desire what you promise,  
that amid the uncertainties of this world,  
our hearts may be fixed on that place where true gladness is found.

### First Reading Isaiah 66: 18–21

**T**he Lord says this: I am coming to gather the nations of every language. They shall come to witness my glory. I will give them a sign and send some of their survivors to the nations: to Tarshish, Put, Lud, Moshech, Rosh, Tubal, and Javan, to the distant islands that have never heard of me or seen my glory. They will proclaim my glory to the nations. As an offering to the Lord they will bring all your brothers, on horses, in chariots, in litters, on mules, on dromedaries, from all the nations to my holy mountain in Jerusalem, says the Lord, like Israelites bringing oblations in clean vessels to the Temple of the Lord. And of some of them I will make priests and Levites, says the Lord.

I begin my prayer by preparing my body. I choose a posture which allows me to feel stable and grounded. If I am able, I open up my shoulders to breathe more easily. I become aware of the points of contact my body makes with the world around me: its weight, the feel of the floor beneath my feet, the movement and rhythm of my breath.

If it seems hard to settle, I try not to struggle, but place myself as I am before the loving presence of God.

When I am ready, I slowly read the words of the prophet, who proclaims a time when all people will be gathered as one in the Lord.

I may find I am drawn to one particular phrase ... if so, I allow that phrase to be the centre of my prayer.

I ask God to draw me deeper into this outpouring of love – the love that wants to bring people of every nation together as sisters and brothers.

I may choose to form an image of the vision of God gathering together the nations from the north, the south, the east and the west.

If I allow that image to form in my mind, what do I feel in my body?

Does it bring me consolation, or am I troubled in some way?

I notice how I feel, and place this before God.

I finish my prayer as I began, bringing my attention back to my body and the points of connection it makes to the world around me.

I slowly pray: *Glory be to the Father ...*

### Gospel Luke 13: 22–30

**T**hrough towns and villages Jesus went teaching, making his way to Jerusalem. Someone said to him, “Sir, will there be only a few saved?” He said to them, “Try your best to enter by the narrow door, because, I tell you, many will try to enter and not succeed.

“Once the master of the house has got up and locked the door, you may find yourself knocking on the door, saying, ‘Lord, open to us,’ but he will answer, ‘I do not know where you come from.’ Then you will find yourself saying, ‘We once ate and drank in your company; you taught in our streets,’ but he will reply, ‘I do not know where you come from. Away from me, all you wicked men!’

“Then there will be weeping and grinding of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and yourselves turned outside. And men from east and west, from north and south, will come to take their places at the feast in the kingdom of God.

“Yes, there are those now last who will be first, and those now first who will be last.”

In order to be more present for my time of prayer, I allow my mind and body to settle in the way that works best for me. It may help to have a focal point such as a candle or an object from nature that reminds me of the presence of God in all things.

I ask for the courage and grace to listen with an open heart to the message of the Gospel. Slowly I read the text. What do I notice on my initial reading? I slowly read it again, and this time imagine being part of the crowd, listening to Jesus teach. Do I notice anything different?

What is Jesus’s intention for the people he teaches?

What does he want them to become aware of?

What does Jesus want to teach *me* about his way, his truth and his life?

Placing myself in the scene, I ask Jesus my own question about the kingdom. What am I being called to do?

I ask Jesus for whatever I need in order to be true to his kingdom values.

I finish my prayer by slowly praying *Our Father...*